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Russian double verbs in the 1st pl Imperative

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Abstract

In this paper, serialized chains of verb forms of the type *pojdem posmotrim* are first examined with respect to their grammatical homonymy (1PL.IMP vs. FUT1PL) and lexical, syntactic and contextual cues that allow to disambiguate it. In section 2, a thorough analysis of data from the Russian national corpus serves to capture the aspectual and lexical constraints of such chains. The last section contains a systematic comparison of said forms with serialized imperatives in the 2nd pl.

Keywords

Imperative, verb serialization, double verbs, colloquial Russian, Russian National Corpus, grammatical homonymy, lexical constraints, verbal aspect

1 Introduction: A tricky case of grammatical homonymy

This study continues a series of articles on the so-called double verbs (for definition see Weiss 2012, 613) in colloquial Russian and written genres influenced by the latter.¹ These papers were devoted to the description of the different subtypes based on the continuum between prototype (semantic and prosodic merger of both verbal components denoting one single event) and prosodic/semantic twins and their conditions of use in modern colloquial speech and the language of traditional folklore. Moreover, Weiss (2000) tackled the question of how this construction should be modelled in an MTT framework of a dependency syntax, Weiss (2003) examined new corpus data from the language of the contemporary press and fiction and established a parallel to similar constructions in Finno-Ugric languages spoken in European Russia, and Weiss (2008) focused on the interpretation of double verbs with perfective aspect, whereas Weiss (2012) treats the whole construction as an instance of SVC (serial verb construction) and elaborates on the Finno-Ugric parallels, including Mordvin and

¹ The relevant list includes letters, diaries, literary fiction, press genres such as reportage, feuilleton etc., Internet communication (blogs, forums, chats), traditional and modern (urban and religious) folklore and dialects. It goes without saying that not all these genres could be equally extracted.

some relics in Balto-Finnic. Whereas the latest papers were based on a corpus of slightly more than 800 tokens in all possible grammatical forms extracted mostly by hand, in a recent study (Weiss 2013) we exclusively investigated one word form, viz. the imperative of the 2PL in the basic corpus (“osnovnoj korpus”) of the Russian National Corpus (RNC). The results of that search will be contrasted with the findings of the present study in section 3.

As is suggested through the use of 1PL.IM, the forms in question serve to realize directive speech acts including both one or more addressee and the speaker. In principle, such forms may be marked **morphologically**, **syntactically** and/or **lexically**, or else remain unmarked. A morphological expression exists in Polish, which offers a special verb form, cf. *pójdźmy* ‘let us go’ vs. *pójdziemy* ‘we will go’. The syntactic alternative is available in languages that use a special word order pattern, cf. German *gehen wir!* (imper.) vs. *wir gehen* (indic.), or require the omission of the subject pronoun, cf. French *allons!* (imper.) vs. *nous allons* (indic.). Lexical means may consist of modal verbs such as German *Lass(t) uns gehen* or English *let us go*, but also of particles, cf. German *gehen wir mal!*. Russian, however, has no obligatory marking: in both the perfective (cf. *pojdem!* ‘let’s go!’) and imperfective aspect (*budem pljasat’!* ‘let’s dance’) the imperative is homonymous with the corresponding pf. or ipf. future tense FUT1PL. In spoken language, **prosody** gives the decisive hint as to which reading is the preferred one. When dealing with written data, however, we have to rely on additional cues. The imperative reading may be optionally marked by (i) the postfixed **particle** *-ka*, (ii) the **semi-particles**² *davaj*, *davajte* and/or (iii) the **postfix** *-te*, which expresses a plurality of addressees and/or the politeness form, cf. *pojdemte!* ‘let us go’ (you all + me / you_{pol} [all] + me). All three procedures may co-occur with each other, cf. *Davajte-ka sjademte!* As for (iii), *pojdemte* is synonymous with *davajte pojdem!* It should, however, be pointed out that despite Isačenko’s view to the contrary, the meanings expressed by the type *pojdemte* may also be realised by the unmarked 1PL.IMP *pojdem*, which thus covers all four values of the two features ‘≥1addressee’ and ‘±polite’. And finally, **punctuation** partially serves as another disambiguating device: the exclamation mark supports the imperative reading, whereas the question mark blocks it. However, even the exclamation mark does not provide an infallible proof since it may occur with the FUT1PL as well. To make things worse, even *-te* turns out to be less impervious than described in text books since it sometimes appears in sentences marked as questions, cf.

- (1) *Xotite, — pojdemte poguljaem?* .. Čudnaja pogoda! [V. V. Veresaev. *K žizni* (1908)]
lit. ‘Do you want – let’s go for a walk? .. it’s beautiful weather!’

Here, the inclusive imperative postfix *-te* conflicts with the question marked by both punctuation and the preceding *xotite*; most probably, the question mark is a misprint. But what are we to do with an utterance marked simultaneously as a question and an exclamation? Cf.

- (2) — Èto ty na kogo namekaeš’, svoloč’! *Pojdem vyjdem?! [Il’dar Abuzjarov. Nenormativnaja leksika (2002)]* ‘Whom are you referring to, you scoundrel! Let’s go outside!’

Here, either *pojdem* *vyjdem* functions as a pragmateme with unequivocal directive meaning

² Since these forms still distinguish number they do not meet the decisive criterion ‘lack of inflexion’. Note by the way that *davati* in Common Slavic could have the same modal meaning as English *let* or German *lassen*; in Russian, this use is more constrained than in West Slavic by now, cf. von Waldenfels 2012.

(1PL.IMP; see next section), or the speaker presents two alternative solutions of the conflict (FUT1PL): ‘Let’s go outside, or take your words back!’

On the other hand, according to (Isačenko, 1975: 308) one has to take into account a negative criterion: if the sentence contains the overt subject *my* ‘we’, the indicative reading is mandatory. This is, however, not a thoroughly reliable criterion since spoken Russian even in the indicative freely allows for the omission of the subject pronoun. In this regard, Russian is located in an intermediate position between French and a real PRO-drop language like Italian, where the subject pronoun is only added when required by the communicative structure (cf. *andiamo* ‘let us go!’ or ‘we are going’). But Isačenko’s restriction should be verified anyway. After all, with imperatives of the 2SG and 2PL the subject pronoun does occur either when being rhematised as in *pojdi ty!* or in contrasting themes as in *Ty₁ schodi za produktami, ty₂ uberi komnatu, a ty₃ vozmis’ za domašnie zadanija!* ‘You₁ go do the shopping, you₂ clean the room, and you₃ get down to your homework’.³ Are these contexts really impossible with the 1PL.IMP? Our corpus does not contain any example that would allow for either a contrasting or a focalised interpretation of the type *Davajte my pojdem!* or *Davajte pojdem my!*, but native speakers accept such examples.

In this way, we face a rather messy situation: most likely, any corpus analysis will provide a large amount of ambiguous contexts. What could then be additional contextual cues that would impose or at least facilitate an unequivocal interpretation? First of all, the **referential potential** of the first person plural calls for closer scrutiny (Norman 2002, Szymański 1990). Its systematic account should not only involve politeness and the number of addressees, but also allow for both the exclusive reading ‘speaker + ≥ 1 person not addressed (e.g. being absent)’ and the cumulative reading ‘speaker + ≥ 1 person not addressed + ≥ 1 addressee’. This amounts to a total of 14 possible combinations.⁴ Among them, the exclusive case is not relevant for our purpose since 1PL.IMP presupposes the existence of at least one addressee. Therefore, if a given context triggers the exclusive reading we may be sure that we are dealing with FUT1PL. Moreover, the number of non-addressed persons within the cumulative reading does not matter. The 8 remaining cases, however, are still ambiguous between FUT1PL and 1PL.IMP. Unfortunately, the limited length of the excerpts from the Russian National Corpus seldom allows for an exact assessment of the referential situation. This holds in particular for the exclusive reading, which imposes the indicative interpretation of the utterance. Only by means of additional adverbs such as *vmeste* ‘together’ can the exclusive reading be ruled out, cf. *Pojdem použinaem vmeste* ‘Let’s go have dinner together’.

And finally, due to pragmatic reasons such as empathy or baby talk the reference of the first person plural may even be shifted on the addressee by excluding the speaker (Weiss 2007, 372-375). This is illustrated by the following example:

³ The subject pronoun may also be found in other contexts, such as magic spells, cf. *Pojdi ty, xvor’, vo čisto pole....* ‘Go, illness, to the wide field’.

⁴ As is well known, the inclusive interpretation may be made explicit by means of *my s toboj/my s vami*. This marker is, however, associated with the indicative reading.

- (3) Davaj *pomoemsja*/ golovku pomoem// Igruški moet/ net čtoby samoj myt'sja! Xolodnaja/ net/ Svet? (Zemskaja/Kapanadze 1978. 248) 'Let's wash/ let's wash your head// [she] is washing her toys instead of washing herself! Cold [water]/ isn't it/ Sveta?

The initial reflexive *pomoemsja* and the subsequent *myt'sja* indicate that the real subject is the child herself, i.e. the addressee.

Another cue is offered by **verbs denoting speech acts**. A fragment of direct speech introduced by *vzmolilas* 'she begged', *ja tebjja umoljaju* 'I implore you' or followed by *prošu tebjja* 'please' or *sdelaj odolženie* 'Do me the favour' imposes the imperative reading. In a similar vein, a string like *pojdem potancuem*, – *priglasil* on 'Let's go [and] dance, – he invited [her]' prevents the indicative reading. Even the verb *skomandovat* 'order' was found: *Pojdem otdyšimsja*, – *skomandovala Svetka* 'Let's go [and] take a breath! Svetka ordered'. The perlocutionary verb *ugovorit* 'persuade, argue into' likewise describes a request, not a statement, therefore it refers to utterances in the 1PL.IMP, cf.:

- (4) ...mne udalos' *ugovorit* ee zajti so mnoj v ètot park poguljat'. — Babon'ka, *pojdem poguljaem* čut'-čut' v parke! Ja tam nikogda ne byl! [Pavel Sanaev. Poxoronite menja za plintusom (1995) // «Oktjabr'», 1996] 'I managed to persuade her to go for a walk to this park. – Granny, let's go for walk a little bit in the park! I've never been there!'

This list can be continued: a context such as *Brat zovet: «Pojdem pokurim s mužikami na dvore»* invites the imperative interpretation 'My brother calls / invites me: "Let's go have a smoke with the guys in the court'. The request may be indicated by a gesture, cf. *On menja manit pal'cem: Pojdem sxodim v bar* 'He attracts me with his finger: Let's go to the bar'. Other verbs admit both readings: for instance, *predložit* 'propose' combines not only with exclamation marks, but occurs in questions as well, which only admit the FUT2PL reading, cf. ...*predložil*: – *Vyp'ete, otcy?* 'and proposed: What about having a drink?'. Moreover, *predložit* may refer to quotations with **modal adverbs** that indicate the speaker's hesitation, cf. *Možet, pojdem razberemsja*, – *predložila Ramil* 'Perhaps, we should go and figure it out?' This is another unequivocal marker of the indicative reading, since *možet* never combines with imperatives, cf. **Možet, pojdi!* **Idi, možet!* '*Go perhaps!' The disambiguating effect of modal adverbs can be further illustrated by *naverno* 'probably', cf. also: *naverno pojdem použinaem vmeste* 'probably, we'll go have dinner together'.

Sometimes the **reaction of the addressee** gives a clear indication that he interpreted a given expression as a request: he then may *soglasit'sja* 'agree' or else refuse by *da net*, *neoxota* 'no, I am not in the mood / I don't feel like this'. In other cases, a 2SG/PL.IMP may prepare the ground for a subsequent 1PL.IMP, cf. *Provetri kak sleduet, nakuril. Pojdem prinesem postel* 'Air the room properly, you have smoked too much. Let's go fetch the bedclothes'; again, this criterion is rather shaky since the indicative interpretation is not completely excluded.

On the other hand, the illocutionary force of the FUT1PL also merits a closer look: as is well known, in Russian the FUT.PRF2SG/PL may express an indirect directive, thus functioning as an equivalent of the imperative, if the addressee is somehow socially subordinated to the speaker. Such relations hold between child and parents, soldier and officer, clerk and boss, but also husband and wife (though not vice versa!); in all these settings, an utterance such as *Musor vyneseš' potom* lit. 'you'll bring the garbage out' would be appropriate. In view of this, one is tempted to interpret certain examples as an instance of FUT.PRF1PL.

To sum up: we have found quite a few contextual cues supporting either the imperative or the indicative interpretation, but many of them have turned out not to be completely reliable in that they may conflict with counterevidence or be overruled by other contextual factors. Thus, our former expectation that a search of double imperatives of the 1PL in the Russian National Corpus will provide a large amount of ambiguous results still remains valid.

2 Analysis of the data

2.1 Imperfective vs perfective aspect: a mismatch

Let us now turn to the search for double verbs in the 1PL.IMP in the Russian National Corpus. For reasons of space, the query was limited to verb pairs in immediate contact, i.e. without another word form separating them from each other. As for punctuation, only verb pairs separated by a space or hyphen were considered; the motivation for this may be found in (Weiss 2013). Contrary to the latter study, dashed forms such as *polučim – ot dadim* ‘if we get X, we’ll give X back’ were no longer taken into account since most often they mark asyndetic links between two clauses. Moreover, as in (Weiss 2013), pairs of lexically identical verb forms were excluded.

The first thing to note is a striking **aspectual asymmetry**: the overwhelming majority of all serialised instances of 1PL.IMP were perfective. To begin with, the imperative model *budem igrat’* ‘let’s play’, described as infrequent in grammars, did not provide one single extended example of the type *budem pet’ igrat’* ‘let’s sing [and] play’ in the basic corpus of the RNC. In this connection, it should be emphasised that such constructions with double infinitives are structurally ambiguous in that the second infinitive may be governed by the first. This turned out to be the case in nearly all examples. The query with «V,imper,pl,1p,ipf na rasstojanii 1 or V,inf,ipf -bmark na rasstojanii 1 or V,inf,ipf -lexred» led to 115 results, but only one of them represented a double verb (*Zavtra my budem dumat’ obsuždat’* ‘tomorrow we’ll think [and] consider’, and this is an obvious instance of FUT1PL. The search for imperatives with *davaj(te)* + double infinitive, which is considered more frequent than the variant with *budem*, was even less successful: none of the 24 instances represented the serial construction. The same holds true for the negated variant *davajte ne budem*.

The search for perfective double imperatives, however, provided 521 hits that met the query «V,imper,pl,1p,(pf | ipf) -bmark na rasstojanii 1 or V,imper,pl,1p,pf». Among them was only a small amount of noise (20 excerpts), e.g. *umrem uvidim* ‘when we’ll die, we’ll see’. Before going into the details, it should be mentioned that 27 hits consisted of the IPF form *idem(te)* ‘we go / let’s go’ and a pf second verb. Most of these examples can be considered instances of 1PL.IMP. This is perfectly in line with the findings on double verbs in the 2PL.IMP (Weiss 2013), where *idite* ‘go.PL!’ occurred in 33 pairs with mixed aspect. Moreover, our collection contains a double imperative with the IPF *bežim* ‘let’s run’ as first component.

2.2 The homonymy FUT1PL vs. 1PL.IMP

Let us first filter out clear instances of FUT1PL. To begin with, the collection comprises 8 cases of the idiom *poživem uvidim* lit. ‘we’ll live we’ll see’, an epistemic marker meaning approximately ‘may be, probably’. This idiom is usually written with dash (174 hits). The

next criterion is the subject pronoun *my* which was present in 22 examples. The question mark followed the double verb forms in 33 examples, two of them with the IPF *idem* as first verb. The modal adverb *možet* ‘perhaps’ appeared in 6 examples not yet included in the group with question mark, *navernoe* ‘probably’ in 1. All three groups together amount to a total of 70 clear instances of the indicative meaning.

The remaining 431 excerpts were then checked for evidence in favour of the imperative interpretation. The verb forms were preceded by 11 instances of *davaj* and 1 instance of *davajte*. 20 of the first imperatives had the postfix *-ka*, another one had *davajte-ka*. The particle *nu-ka* only occurred together with the explicit markers *-te* and *predložila*. To these figures should now be added the results of the separate search for the postfix *-te*,⁵ which was found with 53 first imperatives. Additionally, in 4 examples both imperatives were marked this way; three of them were authored by I. S. Turgenev (mid-nineteenth century). The most recent one is the following:

- (5) *Idemte kupimte tort i otprazdnuem to sobytie*. [K. K. Vaginov. *Trudy i dni Svistonova* (1928-1929)] ‘Let’s go let’s buy a cake and celebrate this event’

The third verb form *otprazdnuem* is again ambiguous: it can represent either FUT1PL or 1PL.IMP. The indicative reading seems to be more convincing, although our data contains a whole range of obvious triplets with the third verb coordinated with the second of the type *davaj sjadem obsudim i rešim* lit. ‘let’s sit down discuss and decide’ or *Pojdem prisjadem na skamejku, pogovorim* ‘Let’s go have a seat on the bench [and] speak’. The only real triplet is the following:

- (6) *Pojdem za saraj ljažem poležim, duša opjat’ bolit*. [A. P. Platonov. *Sčastlivaja Moskva* (1936)] ‘Let’s go behind the barn, lie down [and] lie there a bit, the soul is aching again’

And finally, 29 double verbs were followed by an exclamation mark without additional markers of the 1PL.IMP reading and without evidence to the contrary.

A lexical indicator is the pragmateme (Iordanskaja & Mel’čuk 2007, 305 ff., 311) *pojdem vyjdem* ‘let’s go outside!’, which (much as its English counterpart) functions as a request to settle a conflict through a physical fight and occurs only in the imperative. It was attested 12 times.

Further lexical cues are offered by the speech act verbs mentioned in the previous section. Not less than 29 contexts with *predložit’/predlagat’* ‘propose’ either in the previous or the subsequent sentence and without the additional marker *-ka* invite the 1PL.IMP reading. The remaining verbs provide another 6 contexts with 1PL.IMP, 3 contexts contained the verb *(po)zvat’* ‘call, invite’ pointing in the same direction. So far, our total of double imperatives with explicit markers sums up to 169 instances. Moreover, 17 preceding contexts exhibited a verb in the 2nd SG or PL imperative; however, as mentioned above, this is a rather shaky indicator of the 1PL.IMP reading.

⁵ In the RNC these forms are denoted by a separate category called “imperativ 2”.

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The following table summarises these results (recall that double coding such as *-te* + *-ka* was counted only once):

N = 558

marker	1PL.IMP	FUT1PL
<i>davaj(te)</i>	12	
<i>-ka</i>	21	
<i>-te</i>	57	
<i>pojdem vyjdem</i>	12	
speech act verbs	38	
exclamation mark	29	
total	169 = 30,3%	
after 2SG/PL.IMP	(17 = 3%)	
subject pronoun		22
<i>poživem uvidim</i>		8
modal adverbs		7
question mark		33
total		70 = 12,6 %
unambiguous contexts	238 = 42,9%	

The ratio of 1PL.IMP increases only insignificantly if we take into account additional context features, for instance subsequent occurrences of verbs denoting agreeing or disagreeing. The resulting total of much more than 50% ambiguous cases is of course less than satisfactory. On the other hand, one may argue that users are probably not very concerned about this type of ambiguity. In particular, the hearer of a given utterance could not care less whether it is formulated in the imperative or as a question as long as both variants convey the meaning of the same speech act, e.g. a proposal to do something together. Moreover, it seems a fair assumption that the default interpretation of the construction under scrutiny is the 1PL.IMP. The following observations will corroborate this view.

2.3 Lexical restrictions

If we now turn to the **lexical composition** of our data, we face a strikingly monotonous picture. It should be recalled that the first component (V_1) of a prototypical double verb

construction is lexically more restricted than V_2 (Weiss 2012, 615ff). This holds in particular for the double 1PL.IMP: in 458 cases V_1 is *pojdem(te)*, its ipf counterpart *idem(te)* is attested in 27 cases, in 30 instances we find another motion verb out of the following list: *zajti*, *vyjti*, *prijti*, *sxodit'*, *poxodit'*, *poexat'*, *zaexat'*, *bežat'*, *sbegat'*. Two inversions of V_1 and V_2 are attested, viz. *posmotrim pojdem* 'let-s watch-go' and the following instance of 1PL.IMP:

- (7) ... *predložil* Nikolaju: — *Možet, propustim pojdem* po stopariku? U menja vzjato. Nikolaj otkazalsja. [Roman Sečin. Eltyševy (2008) // «Družba Narodov», 2009] '...he proposed to Nikolaj: – Perhaps, [lit.] we'll down go a shot [of vodka] ? I have some with me. Nikolaj refused.'

In other words: 516 examples or **92,4%** of the total represent verbs of **physical motion**, out of which 486 or 87% belong to the basic verb *pojti* / *idti*! Among them there were no cases of semantic bleaching comparable to imperatives of the 2nd pl such as *podite pojmite ego* litt. 'Go understand him' = 'It's impossible to understand him'.

The remaining part comprises 22 instances of 5 posture verbs (*sest* 'sit down' (7), *leč* 'lie down', *vstat* 'get up', *posidet* 'to sit for a while' (11) and *postojat* 'to stand for a while' (2)). To this should be added the 7 instances of *poživem*, see above. Only 4 other verbs are involved: *poprobovat* 'try', *podoždat* 'wait', *sobrat* 'collect' and *pocelovat* 'kiss'.

Said lexical constraint helps to explain why we did not find a single instance of the **negation** before or in-between the two verbal components:⁶ it would be fairly senseless to announce or ask sb. to go somewhere just for doing nothing. In this regard, the 1st pl differs radically from the 2nd pl (see next section).

As for the second component V_2 , its inventory exhibits a greater diversity. However, the main groups are not very variegated: we found 146 uses of a perception verb,⁷ 121 uses of another motion verb including e.g. *vyjdem* as in the above-mentioned pragmateme *pojdem vyjdem* 'let's go outside', 48 uses related to speech activities (:etc.), 22 uses of posture and related verbs (e.g. *sprjačemsja* 'let's hide'), 17 uses denote various physical activities, eg. picking fruit, cutting grass, weighing maize or freeing prisoners, and 10 refer to mental operations.

As can be seen, most possible combinations of V_1 and V_2 easily lend themselves to the imperative interpretation. On the other hand, it cannot be denied that in many pairs of motion verbs the first verb *pojdem* is almost semantically empty; with the imperative meaning, it thus is turning into another marker of the directive illocution, much as *davaj(te)*. Such a development is of course not exclusively characteristic of Russian; motion verbs such as 'go' or 'come' tend to desemanticise in many languages all over the world, see (Majsak 2005).

Moreover, we are now in a condition to state that all examples found represent the **prototypical** double verb construction, where one verb semantically modifies the other. In

⁶ To be precise, there was one dialectal use of FUT1PL illustrating a folkloristic subtype of double verbs, cf. *lačim ne ulačim* approximately meaning 'we are hugging - won't [can't] hug enough' (V. Apresjan, p.c.).

⁷ Here are the detailed figures: *posmotrim* 'let's / we'll watch' 112, *poslušam* 'let's listen' 8, *uvidim* 'we'll see' 8, *pogljadim* 5, *gljanem* 4, *vzgljanem* 3, *zagljanem* 2, other 4. As this ranking demonstrates, visual perception prevails, amounting to no less than 92%.

terms of the typology of verb serialisation sketched out by (Aikhenvald 2006), this corresponds to the asymmetric type of VS. Non-prototypical DVs, or else: semantic twins (Weiss 2012, 625-632) of the type *est'-pit* 'eat-drink', *spat'-počivat* 'sleep-rest', *stirat'-gladit* 'wash-iron', *razdevat'-odevat* 'undress-dress' etc., where the two components are on a par, simply do not occur.⁸ This again contrasts with the picture to be found with 2nd pl imperatives, which will now be briefly characterized. Before tackling this subject, however, a brief remark on the impact of our observations on the of double verbs in a MTT framework may not be out of order. In (Weiss 2000) we argued that in most cases the natural solution will be to posit a dependency relation $V_1 \rightarrow V_2$, and not vice-versa. The findings of the present paper point in the same direction: if more than 90% of the total contain a motion verb that may take an infinitive as second actant, one might consider whether in the serial construction V_2 simply occupies this valency, cf. *pojdem* \rightarrow *poguljat* vs. *pojdem* \rightarrow *poguljaem*.⁹

3 The contrast: a brief glance at double imperatives in the 2nd pl

The results to be presented here are discussed in more detail in (Weiss 2013). That paper covered a comparable number of data (533 instances), but unlike the present study, it also included uses with one intermediary component, e.g. *smotrite ne prostudites* 'watch out-don't catch cold', *ver'te ne ver'te* 'believe it or not' or *rasskazyvajte svjazno davajte* 'tell the story in a coherent way'. The main contrasts concern the following criteria: (i) lack of homonymy, (ii) negation, (iii) inversion of V_1 and V_2 , (iv) lexical composition, (v) desemanticisation of V_1 and (vi) aspectual properties.

Strings of the type *pojnite sprositate* 'go.PL ask.PL' are not subject to systematic grammatical homonymy, as this was the case in the data examined in the present study. Negation, which has been shown to be completely absent from the 1PL of double verbs, affected 12% of the 2PL.IMP; its scope exclusively encompassed V_2 . Inversion of V_1 and V_2 occurred in 5% of the cases; the corresponding figure in the present study is 0,4%. Lexical composition reveals several contrasts. First of all, not all instances represented the prototype: symmetric pairs such as *pejte-ešte* 'eat drink', *izvinite-prostite* 'excuse-apologise', *zdravstvujte-proščajte* 'welcome good bye' constituted 5% of the total. As for the meaning of V_1 , verbs of motion provided 55% of all uses with immediate contact of V_1 and V_2 , but much less so in distant position. Other typical representatives of V_1 are *davajte*, *voz'mite* 'take', 'do suddenly', *poprobujte* 'try' and several politeness markers. Contrary to the picture obtained with 1.PL, where we only have two idioms (*poživem uvidim*, *pojdem vyjdem*), with 2PL.IMP we find quite a few set phrases, including a syntactic phraseme (Mel'čuk 1995), viz. *smejtes' ne smejtes'* 'laugh.PL don't laugh.PL' and phraseologised V_1 s such as *bud'te dobry* 'be so kind' or *sdelajte odolženie* 'do [me] a favor'. Moreover, unlike with 1.PL, many V_1 s tend to desemanticise or rather

⁸ This may, however, be due to the insufficient amount of data yielded by the RNC. A quick search by Google (L. Iomdin, p.c.) at once provided the following non-prototypical triple: *Priežžaj sēdnja k nam v gosti posidim poedim pop'em!* (<http://www.shytok.net/comments-33661.html>) 'Come over and be our guest: let's sit for a while, eat and drink!'

⁹ In redundant uses, such as *pojdem vyjdem*, the infinitive alternative would however not work, cf. *pojdem *vyjti*.

acquire a new pragmatic meaning: such is the case of *podite* as a marker of rhetorical directives, *smotrite* as a marker of warnings, but above all *davajte*, which functions as a mere signal of the directive illocution comparable to *hajde(te)* in South Slavic languages. And finally, double 2PL.IMP forms are not bound to pf aspect, but allow for many ipf verbs; this leads to a large portion of aspectually mixed pairs (26%). Most of them (89%) show the pattern $V_{1\text{ipf}} + V_{2\text{pf}}$, which is due to the high rate of aspectually unpaired and simultaneously desemanticised V_1 , such as *davajte*, *smotrite*, *bud'te (dobry)*. On the whole, we may thus conclude that 2PL.IMP exhibits much more structural diversity than 1.PL regardless of the two readings (FUT vs. IMP) of the latter. They share, however, one common verb form (*davajte*) which functions as V_1 with 2PL.IMP and an additional marker of the imperative reading with 1PL and one common tendency: V_1 tends to undergo semantic bleaching and to eventually acquire new pragmatic meanings.

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